

Your Care Team - Neurosurgery

You will encounter many different people during your time at the hospital. Some are doctors, others are nurses, while others are rehabilitation specialists. It's hard to remember who does what and who is who. Below is a list of some of the people you may encounter and their role in helping you get better.

DOCTORS

- **NEUROSURGEON:** The Neurosurgeon is a surgeon doctor with specialized training in treating patients with traumatic brain injuries. The Neurosurgeon may have to do brain surgery to help save a patient's life.
- **NEUROLOGIST:** The Neurologist is a doctor who diagnoses and treats diseases of the neurological system. The neurologist may help the patient with treatment of a seizure disorder or headaches resulting from a traumatic brain injury.
- **NEURORADIOLOGIST:** The Neuroradiologist is a doctor who reviews the x-rays, CT scans and MRI's to assist in diagnosing the patient's neurologic condition. After a scan is performed, the neuroradiologist will provide the team with a read of the image.
- **NEUROINTERVENTIONALIST:** The Neurointerventionalist is a doctor who diagnoses and treats neurovascular lesions by way of angiography. They perform cerebral angiograms, vascular coiling procedures and vascular stenting. The neurointerventionalist may perform an angiogram on the patient to determine if there's any injury to the arteries or veins in the neck and brain after a head injury.

NURSES

- **NURSE PRACTITIONER:** The Nurse Practitioner (NP) is an advance degreed nurse who works closely with all of the neurosurgery team members to manage the neurotrauma patient. The NP has specialized skills and training in managing the care of the patient while in the hospital. The NP will help the team manage the patient from the emergency room to the clinic. The NP will provide education and help the patient make plans for leaving the hospital.
- **CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALIST:** The Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) is an advance degreed nurse who works closely with the neurosurgery team to provide training and education to family members and staff about patients with traumatic brain injuries. The CNS also works hard to assure quality assurance and develops policies and procedures to maintain high quality care. The CNS will help the patient understand their injury and provide support to the patient and family.
- **RESEARCH REGISTERED NURSE:** The Research Nurse promotes the science of neurosurgery by carrying out clinical research studies in which patients at SFGH participate.
- **REGISTERED NURSE:** Nurses provide holistic care to the Neurotrauma patients throughout their stay at SFGH. Registered nurses (RN) are responsible for providing all of the care for the patient while in the hospital. They assess and intervene according to the patient's physiological needs. In the Intensive Care Units at SFGH, the highly experienced nursing staff cares for neurosurgical patients using state of the art monitoring equipment and current practice standards. ICU nurses give one-on-one care to the most critically ill head injured and neurologically compromised patients. Specialized assessments focus on such neurologic parameters as a detailed clinical exam, intracranial and cerebral perfusion pressures, brain tissue oxygen and cerebral blood flow measurements and electroencephalogram recording. Nurses work collaboratively with medical staff, pharmacy, respiratory, dietary, speech pathology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy colleagues to provide best practice to the culturally and socially diverse patient

population. This challenging and rewarding environment has attracted and retained health care professionals from around the world.

- **LICENSED VOCATIONAL NURSE:** The Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) works with the RN in providing care to the patients.
- **COACH/CERTIFIED NURSE ASSISTANT:** The Certified Nurse Assistant provides brain injured patients with guidance and support with eating, bathing, and mobilization. They are a critical part of the Restorative Care Program at SFGH.

NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST

The Neuropsychologist is a doctoral level psychologist with specialized training in working with patients with brain injuries and other neurological injuries. The role of the Neuropsychologist is to assess the cognitive skills and emotional adjustment following the traumatic brain injury.

MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS

The Social Worker helps to coordinate discharge planning and provides emotional support to the patients and family members while in the hospital. There is also a social worker who can see patients once they leave the hospital to help assist with the transition back home.

REHABILITATION SPECIALISTS

Rehabilitation Specialists evaluate and treat brain and spinal injured patients of all ages to help patients gain maximum mobility and function to regain independence. Below are the different therapists and specialists in the Rehabilitation Department.

- **PHYSIATRIST:** The Physiatrist is an expert at treating individuals with disabling conditions that result from traumatic injuries to severe illnesses. Physiatrist lead a team of medical and rehabilitation professionals to help restore individuals to their maximal function.
- **PHYSICAL THERAPIST:** Physical therapists improve muscle strength, joint mobility, coordination, endurance, movement, and function through exercise and modalities to reduce and prevent disabilities. Functional abilities include the ability to move in bed, to get out of bed, ambulate, climb stairs, and get in and out of cars. Therapists may utilize specialized modalities including ultrasound, electrical stimulation, TENS, traction, heat and cold to promote recovery.
- **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST:** Occupational therapists are specialists who work to improve function in the hands and upper body and promote activities of daily living skills (ADL's). ADL's include things such as dressing, grooming, cooking, cleaning, managing finances, shopping, and commuting. OT's also improve upper extremity joint mobility and strength through exercise, splinting and modalities such as heat and cold, and ultrasound.
- **SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST:** Speech Language Pathologists work with patients with communication, cognition, voice and swallowing (dysphagia) problems. Communication includes speech voice, receptive and expressive language, reading, writing, nonverbal communication and alternative communication devices. Dysphagia includes diagnostic evaluation of the oral cavity, throat and vocal cords. Cognition includes attention, memory, and higher level thinking processes.

REGISTERED DIETICIAN

Registered dietitians provide detailed assessments of a patient's nutritional needs and recommend appropriate dietary changes throughout their recovery.

RESPIRATORY THERAPIST

Respiratory therapists are specialists who help a patient maintain their breathing health and are responsible for maintaining any related breathing equipment.